

## Gauging half century of party chairs



38 Hoosiers have held the major party position of power

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Rex Early enunciated the central truth about the reality of a major party power: “Being state chairman with a governor and being state chairman without a governor is the difference between ice cream

and dog poop.” Since 1960, there have been 37 Republican and Democratic chairmen and for two years, Ann DeLaney ran the Indiana Democratic Party. This club of power is almost exclusively dominated by white males. In addition to DeLaney, the only minority chair was Robin Winston under Gov. Frank O’Bannon.

There were the transformational chairs like Republicans James Neal, Jim Kittle, Eric Holcomb and now

**Continued on page 3**

## Cities thrive in pandemic

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The pandemic has spun off a number of curve balls, from missing workers, to supply change disruptions and angry school board confrontations over masking, but if you’re a Hoosier mayor or city council member, well, grab your shades because the future is bright.

That’s because the Democratic-controlled Congress passed and President Biden signed the American Rescue Act, bringing more than \$4 billion in federal emergency funds to the state, including \$1.28 billion for cities and towns.

Over the summer and fall, mayors and city councils have steadily developed plans to imple-



**“This mayor is not interested in the head cases from Chicago coming to the Hammond PD. Officers willing to throw away their career over a political issue? I just don’t want that. The No. 1 killer of police officers right now is COVID-19.”**

- Hammond Mayor McDermott





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**Jack E. Howey**  
 editor emeritus  
 1926-2019



ment the funding. Whiting is investing in a new water main. South Bend is investing in pre-K and community centers, providing relief for residents behind on their water bills, fund demolitions of vacant commercial buildings that pose imminent safety risks. Indianapolis is putting more than \$400 million in public safety. Hammond is spending on lead remediation and "shovel ready" infrastructure projects.

And this is before Indiana begins doling out \$500 million in READI grants for regional projects, with ARP funds available for municipal matching grants.

"For the most part, cities and towns have fared quite well," said Accelerating Indiana Municipalities CEO Matt Greller. "Indiana's fiscally conservative nature, regardless of what kind of politics is behind your name, is paying off. Cities and towns are well positioned."

Greller has emphasized to its member cities and towns that all of this federal money "is a one-time shot" and urged General Assembly members who are preparing to roll back the 30% business property tax not to "over react" with tax cuts. Greller had been concerned about a lag in 2022 income tax revenue, "But that's been more than offset by the federal government."

While Indiana's metros above 50,000 population have received ARP funds directly from the federal government, those under that population threshold receive funds from the state. "They're working with the Indiana Finance Authority, which has walked them through the process," Greller said, noting that 98% of these communities have received funding.

ARP offers considerable freedom regarding spending abilities, outlining four broad categories of eligible expenditures:

- To respond to the public health emergency and its economic impacts;

- To replace lost government revenue, to the extent attributable to the pandemic;

- To respond to workers performing essential work;

- To invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

- It also provides special guidelines for qualified Census tracts and disproportionately harmed communities.

According to the Brookings Institute, "State lawmakers are leveraging a major portion of the state's

ARP funding to tackle regional inclusion at a truly meaningful scale through a \$500 million grant program supporting 10 regions across the state. This new program is informed by various Indiana precedents, beginning with the Lilly Endowment's Strategic Community Advancement Initiatives, which have operated since 2007, and the state's 2015 Regional Cities Initiative."

In his State of the State address last January, Gov. Eric Holcomb's proposed Next Level Regional Recovery program aimed at helping Indiana regions .

Initially, the Next Level grant program was funded at \$150 million. By the time the budget deal was finalized in mid-April, the program had been renamed the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI), and its budget boosted to \$500 million, all of it funded by ARP.

"We will begin to invest new dollars into a new Next Level Regional Recovery program," Holcomb said in his State of the State address. "The IEDC will work with regions that collaborate to develop strategies designed to improve quality of place, advance industry sector development, and grow workforce development initiatives among regions, educators, employers, and our state's workforce."



All 92 counties have submitted applications for READI grants from 17 regions, totaling more than \$1 billion.

**Greller noted that guidance** from the Treasury Department is not final on how ARP funds can be used. "That's causing a bit of concern," he said. "Most of these communities are taking a very methodical, conservative approach."

While Indiana Democrats have noted on an almost

daily basis that not a single congressional Republican voted for ARP, Greller noted that AIM members "have always done a good job of staying out of the political fray."

"I've never been more impressed by Indiana local leaders putting aside the political talk," Greller said. "Most officials have never seen this level of investment from Congress." ❖

**Brian Howey is publisher of HPI.**

## Party chairs, from page 1

Kyle Hupfer, and Democrats like John Livengood and Joe Andrew, who helped pave the way for gubernatorial party switches and prolonged power maintenance.

There were placeholder chairs like Republican Mike McDaniel and Democrats Gordon St. Angelo, Dan Parker and John Zody, who attempted with varying degrees of success to stabilize their parties while lacking resources (i.e. the governor).

There were those who served at the pleasure of their governors: Thomas Milligan and Bruce Melchert under Gov. Doc Bowen; Gordon Durnil during Gov. Robert Orr's two terms; Murray Clark and Holcomb under Gov. Mitch Daniels; Hupfer under Gov. Holcomb; Democrats John Livengood, Michael Pannos and DeLaney under Gov. Evan Bayh, and Robin Winston under Gov. Frank O'Bannon; Joe Hogsett and Kip Tew under Gov. Joe Kernan; Tim Berry and Jeff Cardwell under Gov. Mike Pence.



And there were the rescue chairs – Rex Early and current Democratic Chairman Mike Schmuhl – who took the job when their parties were at a low ebb.

Early describes in his book, "It's a Mighty Thin Pancake," that he was summoned to Indianapolis by a "friend" urging him to run for the chair on February 1991. The party was about \$600,000 in debt after previous chairs Virgil Scheidt and Keith Luse displayed a lack of fundraising prowess. After the Republican Central Committee elected Early, he was met in the lobby by an Indiana National Bank representative, who wanted the new chair to personally guarantee a \$300,000 note the party had borrowed during the waning days of the 1988 campaign. A few weeks later, a friend of Early's wrote a \$5,000 check

so the party could make its payroll.

Early took the helm as Gov. Bayh ended the license branch money that used to flow into the party in power. When Early met with the president of Indiana Bell and was told the company didn't donate to political parties, Early glanced at his watch, got up and said, "I forgot, I'm supposed to be waxing my alligator, so I have got to go."

Party chairs have four major duties: Raise money, keep the party functioning by making the right hires and developing the best practice technology, recruit candidates, and make peace with the various party factions.

Here are some of the notable Republican chairs:

**John K. Snyder:** The state treasurer had a stormy tenure with Gov. Edgar Whitcomb, ending with his resignation in early 1972. Doc Bowen described in his book, "Doc: Memories from a Life of Public Service," that Snyder had engaged in "pitched battles with Gov. Whitcomb" that had "embarrassed Republicans, irrespective of their factional alliances. Eventually, concern about their feud and what it might do to the party's chances in 1972 led to a consensus that saw Snyder's resignation."

**James Neal:** The Noblesville Daily Ledger editor was elected to replace Snyder.

Bowen writes, "As party secretary, he presided at the 1966 House caucus when I was elected speaker. I knew Jim would be neutral and fair and I expected him to be a superb chair. He was exactly that." Neal had intended to resign after the election, but he agreed to stay on.

### Thomas S. Milligan and Bruce

**Melchert:** Milligan succeeded Neal as chair, then ran unsuccessfully for RNC chair, losing to former Tennessee senator Bill Brock. Melchert took the reins of the party and created the 1976 "Bowen Team" ticket that included Treasurer Julian Ridlen, Charlie Loos for auditor, Ed Simcox for secretary of state and Marjorie O'Laughlin for clerk of courts. Bowen writes of Melchert: "This five-foot, five-inch enthusiastic, hardworking forward thinker did a very credible job for four and a half years."

**Gordon Durnil:** He was a protege of legend-

ary Marion County Republican Chairman L. Keith Bulen who took the reins of the GOP during the middle of its 20-year dynasty, serving for eight years under Gov. Robert Orr. Durnil writes in 2017, "We set out to establish three clear purposes: 1, Create a metropolitan form of government for the county (UniGov) to make government more efficient; 2, Create a University of Indianapolis under the thinking that no city can be great without a great university; 3, Always put forth qualified candidates for election. We accomplished purpose number 1 and UniGov still functions. As for the third purpose, we sought out highly qualified candidates for public office – physicians, lawyers, business people, educators, etc. We ran a CPA for county treasurer, a physician for coroner. We also had some "simply average" folks in the mix. Our quality candidates won for 25 or so years, but then it became more and more difficult to entice high quality individuals to seek public office. During my term as GOP chairman I found it increasingly difficult to recruit high quality individuals. The primary reason being the destructive instincts of the opposing party and the media encouraging them to tear into an individual who has high public approval." Durnil stands out in another way, becoming one of the first Republican leaders to embrace environmentalism well before the term "climate change" became in vogue.

**Rex Early:**

The Wheatfield native served only two years as party chair when the GOP was just a few years into the final era of Democratic gubernatorial dominance, but he stands out for several reasons. First, he went from party chair to a regular on the PBS show "Indiana Week in Review" where he continued to shape the GOP talking points. This was important in the pre-Internet, pre-social media world. He became the first modern party chair to run for governor, finishing second in 1996 Republican primary to Steve Goldsmith despite having the endorsements of some 70 county chairs, including nearly every one from southern Indiana, where Goldsmith was upset by Lt. Gov. Frank O'Bannon. Early would be followed by fellow chairs Joe Andrew, Eric Holcomb and now Kyle Hupfer in attempting to use the chair as a gubernatorial stepping stone. Early's comic personality yielded scores of stories, many of which cannot be told here, lending to an

**Republicans Chairs**

- Thomas A. Gallmeyer** (1961–62)
- H. Dale Brown** (1962–63)
- Robert N. Stewart** (1963–65)
- Charles O. Hendricks** (1965–67)
- Buena Chaney** (1967–70)
- John K. Snyder** (1970–72)
- James T. Neal** (1972–73)
- Thomas S. Milligan** (1973–77)
- Bruce B. Melchert** (1977–81)
- Gordon K. Durnil** (1981–89)
- Virgil D. Scheidt** (1989)
- Keith Luse** (1989–91)
- Rexford C. Early** (1991–93)
- Al Hubbard** (1993–94)
- Mike McDaniel** (1995–2002)
- Jim Kittle** (2002–06)
- Murray Clark** (2006–10)
- Eric Holcomb** (2010–13)
- Tim Berry** (2013–15)
- Jeff Cardwell** (2015–17)
- Kyle Hupfer** (2017–)

out-sized impact as a beloved Republican Party elder. And Early scored perhaps the biggest "third act" in Hoosier history, when he abandoned support in 2016 for John Kasich and decided to back Donald Trump for president. Early correctly gauged the mood of Hoosier Republicans who wanted to "build the wall." While the initial Republican RNC slate contained just two Trump backers – Early and Sullivan County Chairman Bill Springer – by July Trump selected Indiana Gov. Mike Pence for the ticket, to be followed by a pair of 57% showings in 2016 and 2020, the former allowing Holcomb to ascend to the governorship. Early was also instrumental in orchestrating a number of Hoosiers into the Trump administration.

**Mike McDaniel:**

He had managed Lt. Gov. John Mutz's 1988 campaign that lost to Evan Bayh, ending the first modern GOP dynasty. He was deputy campaign manager in the 1980 and 1984

Orr/Mutz campaigns. He served as GOP chair from 1995 to 2002, a tenure just short of Durnil's record. Early observed in his book, "It's a Mighty Thin Pancake," writing, "Mike McDaniel was a good state chairman. He loved the job and was cut out to be a state chairman. He was a great organizer and spent a lot of his blood sugar and effort in raising money the old-fashioned way: Putting together

state fundraising dinners with a top-notch main speaker. Mike really wanted the RNC to be in Indianapolis and almost got it. No one has ever loved the job like Mike did."

**Jim Kittle:**

In the [Aug. 20, 2001 edition of Howey Politics Indiana](#): Perhaps late on the night of Nov. 7, 2002, or on Election Night 2004, Indiana Republicans will look back on Aug. 14, 2001, and say that was the

day their new-found successes began. It was last Tuesday that The Phoenix Group had its open house at the Klipsch Audio Technologies headquarters near the Indianapolis pyramids. It was a fundraiser like no other the party had seen in years. The Phoenix Group formed earlier this year by GOP financiers Jim Kittle, Bob Grand and Randall Tobias in an effort to reinvigorate the once thriving Indiana Republican machine that has been shut out of gubernatorial races since the rise of Evan Bayh in 1988. Kittle and other



Republican financiers have grown frustrated over what they see as a four-year cycle of "reinventing the wheel" when it comes to statewide races. "It seems like we start from scratch every time," he told Howey Politics. And there's been growing frustration over high-level campaigns run by John Mutz, Stephen Goldsmith, David McIntosh and Sue Anne Gilroy where a lack of money hasn't been a problem. What has hamstrung Indiana Republicans has been top-flight competition, poor strategy and execution, and a lack of competitive technology.

Kittle joined Bob Grand and Randy Tobias in forming The Phoenix Group, which was essentially a shadow party. When Mike McDaniel stepped down, it created a race between Kittle and Grant County's John Earnest (who had lost a chair race to Rex Early a decade before), with Kittle prevailing. It was all seen as a precursor to Mitch Daniels leaving his White House budget director post to run for governor. Daniels would say after Kittle was elected chair, "I would walk across hot coals for Jim Kittle and Ed Simcox." Kittle told Howey Politics after he was elected, "All sorts of people came up to me after he spoke and said I should recruit Mitch. What I'm doing is creating a political party that will be strong enough to help great candidates when they become available. We want to recruit best of class candidates. But there was no clear signal that Mitch has changed his position." As we all know, Daniels came back and defeated Democrat Gov. Joe Kernan in 2004, setting in motion the second GOP dynasty that is still intact today.

**Eric Holcomb:** He was unanimously elected GOP chairman after Murray Clark stepped down in January 2011. Holcomb found a party seething with discontent as Treasurer Richard Mourdock challenged U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar in the GOP primary while the Tea Party movement prevailed across the party. But it was also a party of seething testosterone as Rep. Mike Pence and Gov. Mitch Daniels openly toyed with seeking the 2012 presidential nomination. When First Lady Cherie Daniels gave the GOP keynote address in April 2011, hundreds green and white "Run Mitch

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# The Howey Political Report



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## Indiana GOP seems to embrace Phoenix

Multiple wings of the party show up

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY, in Indianapolis**  
Perhaps late on the night of Nov. 7, 2002, or on Election Night 2004, Indiana Republicans will look back on Aug. 14, 2001, and say that was the day their new-found successes began.

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Kittle and other Republican financiers have grown frustrated over what they see as a four year cycle of "reinventing the wheel" when it comes to statewide races. "It every time," he told HPR where a lack of money has hamstringing Indiana competition, poor strategy competitive technology. GOP appeared to be coalesce- State Chairman Mike n Ann Harcourt joined Kittle event. The party's new was there. National



ment by Gov. Mike Pence as LG, and then his unprecedented July gubernatorial nomination by the Indiana Republican Central Committee six months later. Now in his second term as governor, Holcomb just missed setting the plurality record set by Gov. Bayh in 1992. One Central Committee member told HPI, "Where Eric showed a lot of leadership is he did a really good job in bringing the various wings of the party together."

**Kyle Hupfer:** After the 2020 election, Chairman Hupfer pondered how much more dominant the state party could be. Hoosier Republicans now control 88% of all county elected offices, or 1,330 out of 1,509. This comes on top of holding all of the Statehouse constitutional offices, nine out of 11 congressional offices, 71 mayoral offices after a 19-office increase in 2019, while it has maintained super majorities in the Indiana House (71 out of 100) and Senate (39 out of 50). In a memo to party



stakeholders in December 2020, it was noted that Hupfer's partnership with Gov. Holcomb has led to four of the strongest years in party history, with \$25 million raised. The Indiana GOP has set and broken fund-raising and voting records, made significant inroads with constituencies not historically aligned with their party, and expanded the map of elected Republicans throughout the state. The combined fundraising total for the 2017-2020 period is: State party: \$12,533,029; Eric Holcomb For Indiana: \$12,503,883; for a fundraising total of \$25,036,912. "Never has a political team achieved the successes Gov. Holcomb, Chairman Hupfer, and the Indiana Republican Party have achieved at every level," the GOP memo stated. "The Indiana Democrats have been relegated to minor, fringe-party status, unable or unwilling to compete for Hoosier votes. Each time the Indiana Republican Party was said to have reached a political zenith, we've gone even higher and broadened our party even more. And we aren't done."



## Indiana Democrats

Here are some of the more impactful 17 men and women who have served as Indiana Democrat chair since 1952

**Gordon St. Angelo:** After managing Gov. Roger D. Branigin's campaign in 1964, St. Angelo was elected state Democratic Party chairman, a position he held until 1974, a tenure longer than that of any party chairman in Indiana. Though he started his career in the Democratic Party, he was a supporter of many Republican candidates since the mid-70s, endorsing Mitch Daniels for both of his campaigns.

**John Livengood:** While Keith Bulen had an out-sized multi-generational impact on Hoosier Republicans, it was Secretary of State Larry Conrad who had a similar impact on Democrats. Livengood explained, "I was one of the many young people that became involved in the Democratic Party through the political campaigns of Secretary of State Larry Conrad." He took the party helm in 1984 as State Sen. Wayne Townsend ran for governor. He then presided over the rise of Evan Bayh, who ran and won a secretary of state race in 1986, and in early 1988 helped broker a deal between Bayh and then State Sen. Frank O'Bannon who had already declared for governor. The resulting Bayh/O'Bannon ticket helped forge 16 consecutive years of the party's last gubernatorial rule.

**Ann DeLaney:** She ran the party under Gov. Bayh for two years, becoming the only Hoosier female

to do so. She ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor in 1984. She became Gov. Evan Bayh's legislative director in 1989. After serving as chair of the Indiana Democratic Party, she authored the guide "Politics for Dummies" and became a regular on "Indiana Week in Review."

**Joe Andrew:** He served as Gov. Bayh's final chair, bridging to the O'Bannon era. Following his stint as Indiana chair, he followed the footsteps of Thomas Taggart, becoming Democratic National chairman in 1999 at the behest of President Clinton, at the age of 39, one of the youngest chairpersons in the history of the DNC. He later served as chairman of the New Democratic Network, and in 2006 helped to found The Blue Fund, a mutual fund which invests in companies that contribute to Democratic campaigns. He now serves as the global chairman of Dentons, the world's largest law firm. After Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan announced he would not seek the governorship in late 2002, Andrew ran and in the summer of 2003, announced a ticket with Bren Simon. Gov. Frank O'Bannon's death in September 2003 reset the governors race, as now Gov. Kernan opted back in and Andrew dropped out.

**Robin Winston:** In 1999, he made history when Gov. O'Bannon selected him as chair, becoming the first (and only) African-American to chair a major political party in Indiana. Winston had been Lt. Gov. O'Bannon's economic development liaison. In 1996, Winston served as deputy campaign manager for O'Bannon in what became the greatest upset in modern gubernatorial history. Winston served as chair during



O'Bannon's reelection victory over Rep. David McIntosh in 2000. Winston now runs the Winston/Terrell Group, one of the largest minority-owned government affairs, community relations and public outreach firms in the nation.

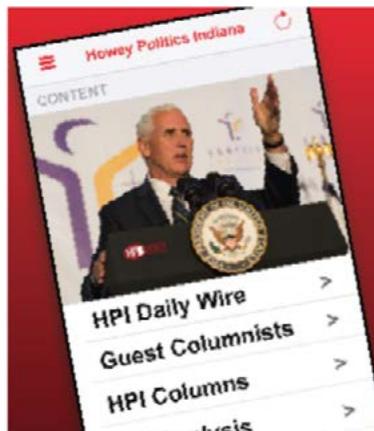
**Peter Manous:** This Lake County Democrat was chosen by Gov. O'Bannon to succeed Winston as chair, setting in motion a series of events that ended up with Lt. Gov. Kernan pulling out of the 2004 gubernatorial race in December 2002. Kernan felt that he should have chosen the next party chair and was angered when Manous was elevated while he was out of the state. Manous resigned after he was indicted by the federal

government in a Region land deal that defrauded a union pension fund. Manous was convicted and served 27 months in federal prison. While Kernan ran for governor in 2004 after O'Bannon's death, the time he sat out of the 2004 race created the opening for Mitch Daniels to end the Democratic Party's 16-year gubernatorial run.

**Dan Parker:** He was the last Democratic chairman who presided over election success. He recruited Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth, who along with Joe Donnelly and Baron Hill won three congressional seats in 2006. He also made the decision not to contest the reelection of U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar, which allowed the party to direct resources into the three congressional races as well as retaking the Indiana House. Two years later, Barack Obama became the first Democrat to carry the state's 11 Electoral College votes since 1964. Hoosier Democrats also successfully defended their Indiana House majority, the first time in history that a winning governor's party did not win that chamber. It would be the last time Indiana Democrats would control a General Assembly chamber. But Parker had regrets in 2008, as Jim Schellinger and Jill Long Thompson had a slugfest primary for governor. It allowed Gov. Daniels to win reelection with 58% of the vote despite his approval numbers falling into the 40% range just a year before the election. Parker later lamented that the decision to avoid a contested primary was "disastrous." In 2010, U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh abruptly ended his reelection bid just hours before the filing deadline, setting in motion an Ellsworth campaign switch for Senate and other down ballot shifts. All would lose, sending the Democratic Party into its current historic tailspin. The party holds only a couple of General Assembly seats in southern Indiana and has subsequently become relegated to urban counties and college towns. Before Parker stepped down, he presided over the 2012 victories of Joe Donnelly in the Senate race and Glenda Ritz in the superintendent of public instruction race.

**John Zody:** He served for eight years as party chair and never won a statewide or federal race.

**Mike Schmuhl:** He rose to national prominence managing South Bend mayor Pete Buttigieg's meteoric presidential campaign in 2019-20, winning the Iowa caucuses by concentrating on rural areas. That campaign raised more than \$100 million. Schmuhl had run campaigns for Joe Donnelly and Shelli Yoder and served as Mayor Buttigieg's first chief of staff. He initially turned down the race for chair, then reconsidered and took the post in March, facing the deepest trough the party has experienced. He has since scheduled three statewide tours, including the current rural and small town outreach, reasoning that the party had to "show up" even in deep red counties and communities. Schmuhl told HPI that the year he was born, 1984, South Bend Mayor Jerry Miller chaired the party. "It's a very unique job," Schmuhl told HPI on Tuesday. "I think each person brings their own skill set to the job. Just like anything in politics, there's so much to delve into and you bring your own set of skills to the table. The other thing kind of strange for me is I kind of ran on my own. Of course, I worked for prominent Democrats but a lot of chairs are put in by powers-that-be, where there's a senator or governor, a bigger figure. We didn't have that this go-around. I think that frees me up in a way." Told I was leading this story with the Rex Early quote about being a chair without a governor, Schmuhl said, "That's a really good one. I had ice cream last night." ❖



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# Schmuhl opposes partisan school election

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Hoosier Democrats predict that General Assembly Republicans will move to create partisan school board elections during the upcoming 2022 session.

"A couple years ago, they changed that position from an elected office to appointed," Indiana Democratic Chairman Mike Schmuhl told Howey Politics Indiana on Tuesday, of taking the superintendent of public instruction and making it a gubernatorial cabinet office. "The reason was to take politics out of education. Now just a few years later, they're saying they want to make local elections partisan. That's just illogical. A few years ago,



Mitch Daniels (advocated) that school board elections should be just general elections. It keeps primaries out of the process. Education should not be super political. It's just another manufactured reaction."

Schmuhl joined former Republican superintendent Jennifer McCormick in opposing the concept. Speaking on WISH-TV "All Indiana Politics" on Sunday, she said, "It's very much of an organized effort that's coming from outside of Indiana to cause disruption with critical race theory or social and emotional learning skills and curriculum tied to that. It's very purposeful, and it goes back to an anti-public education push that again is coming outside of Indiana. It's causing a lot of disruption."

McCormick added, "It does not do anyone any good, including our students, to have a bunch of disruption at a school board. Families who are discouraged or frustrated with their school board and their leaders, there's an appropriate way to handle that, and it's not certainly showing up at school boards and threatening people or yelling at people and being disruptive. That is not serving anyone well."

## U.S. Senate

### McDermott says no to hiring Chicago cops

Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. is a Democrat and unreservedly proud of the Hammond Police Department, as well as an unabashed supporter of law enforcement in general. But the five-term leader of Lake County's most populous city has no interest in hiring cops who willfully ignore lawful, direct orders, or deliberately undermine the chain-of-command (Carden, NWI Times). On Friday, McDermott blasted U.S. Sen. Mike Braun for offering to help Chicago police officers who lose their jobs for refusing to comply with the city's employee COVID-19 vaccination mandate find new positions at Indiana law enforcement agencies. "This mayor is not interested in the head cases

from Chicago coming to the Hammond Police Department," McDermott said on his "Left of Center" podcast. "(Officers) willing to throw their career away over a political issue? I just don't want that. The number one killer of police officers across the country right now is COVID-19." McDermott admitted he is no fan of Lightfoot. He said her political career is "toast," said "she's not going to get re-elected," and noted "she's hated in Chicago." He also said he's glad there's no employee vaccine mandate for the city of Hammond or the state of Indiana. "If you're willing to throw all that away over a shot, during a pandemic; if you're that rigid, I don't really want you in the Hammond Police Department, I'll be honest with you. Because I imagine you're going to be a pain in my ass a couple years down the road also and you're going to be a pain in the chief's ass," he said. "You can't be a police officer and not take orders from the mayor."

## Statewides

### Nieshalla announces for treasurer

Boone County Council President, successful entrepreneur in real estate investments, and mother of four, Elise Nieshalla, a conservative Republican, announced she is running for Treasurer: "As Indiana's next State Treasurer, I will defend the economic freedom of Hoosiers, further ensure Indiana's pension investments align with our values, and safeguard and grow Indiana's financial assets," Nieshalla said. "As a real estate entrepreneur and mom of four, I understand the value of a dollar. I will take that perspective, as well as my experience serving as President of the Boone County Council, the fiscal body for one of the fastest growing counties in Indiana, to the State Treasurer's Office," Nieshalla added.



## General Assembly

### HD73: Davisson son wins caucus

J. Michael Davisson (R-Salem) was named to complete the term of his father, Rep. Steve Davisson (R-Salem), who died of cancer last month. He'll face a primary against another GOP incumbent, State Rep. Jim Lucas, if he opts to run for a full term (WBIW). "For 11 years, I watched my father work tirelessly to serve the people of his district and to improve the lives of all Hoosiers," Davisson said. "I am honored to have the privilege to carry on his work. I am committed to serving with the same sense of loyalty, duty, integrity, and respect that he exemplified."

### HD45: Ellington to shift districts

State Rep. Jeff Ellington changed his voter registration address this week from his That Road home just south of Bloomington to an abandoned brick building in

Bloomfield he bought for a bargain price in 2018 to renovate (Lane, Bloomington Herald-Times). He and his wife now will be living in District 45, which contains about half of Ellington's former District 62. He intends to run for reelection to the House of Representatives in the district currently represented by House Assistant Majority Whip Bruce Borders. Borders, who has served District 45 in two stints totaling 15 years and moonlighted as an Elvis Presley impersonator, could not be reached Friday morning for comment. New Republican-backed redistricting maps, which Ellington voted against, took conservative Greene County out of his Republican-heavy district and left Ellington in a more Democratic-leaning one. "Wednesday, Hope and I changed our voter registration to our Bloomfield address," Ellington said in an email response to questions about his move. "It is my intention to run for reelection in 2022 from our Greene County home. This would put me in District 45 — Greene, Sullivan, and parts of Daviess, Knox, Vigo — in the 2022 elections, and not District 62, which used to be based around Greene County."

### Pol elected to SD4

Rodney Pol Jr. of Chesterton was elected to succeed former state senator Karen Tallian to serve the District 4 seat in the Indiana State Senate. Pol, who works as an attorney for the city of Gary, was endorsed at the caucus by the outgoing 16-year lawmaker. Pol won on the second ballot with 29 votes, defeating Deborah Chubb with 14 and Todd Connor with 11. "First and foremost, the Indiana Democratic Party wants to thank Karen Tallian for her service to District 4 and Indiana with the kind of honor, passion, and commitment that exemplifies the definition of what a public servant should be in our politics," said Democratic Chairman Mike Schmuhl. "Senator



Tallian has been a perennial champion for Hoosier families, and her advocacy for issues like women's health care, criminal justice reform, and future cannabis legalization have made a major impact on our state. We wish Karen the best, and know that she won't be too far away from the ongoing debates facing Indiana. Pol is a proven leader in the Chesterton community, and Democrats could not be more excited to have another champion in the General Assembly fighting for a better future for Hoosier families. Pol will join Democrats in advocating for livable wage jobs for workers, affordable and accessible broadband internet, and fully-funding Indiana's public schools. Democrats are delivering solutions to today's problems for Hoosiers and I know Rodney is ready to get to work."

### Sen. J.D. Ford kicks off reelect

State Sen. Jon Ford has announced he is seeking another term in SD38. "When I initially ran for office, I could see great potential for the Wabash Valley, but

unfortunately progress wasn't being made because our elected officials were more interested in playing politics than making real change," Ford said. "During my tenure in the State Senate, I have remained an independent leader focused on delivering results. I have always put people before politics and have worked with all sides, including business and labor groups, to get things done. At times I've had to stand up to my own party or special interests for the betterment of the district. And I've delivered on my promises of providing additional support for our local schools, teachers, and students, protecting and attracting higher-paying jobs for the middle class, securing record infrastructure funding that has allowed us to finally complete the West Terre Haute Connector — among other projects — and improving the local economy."

### Baldwin describes Oath Keepers donation

Sen. Scott Baldwin told Howey Politics Indiana he made a donation to Oath Keepers 11 years ago when running for sheriff of Hamilton County. "I initially had no recollection or familiarity with the organization, but have since discovered that back in April 2010, more than 11 years ago, when I was running for county sheriff, an advocate for the organization described it to me as a 2nd Amendment rights group, and I donated \$30," Baldwin said in a statement to HPI. "I haven't had any interaction or communication since. Recent media reports indicate that the group has changed significantly since its founding in 2009." Baldwin, R-Noblesville, was responding to a ProPublica report that he is an "annual" member of the Oath Keepers, which played a pivotal role in the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol insurrection. Senate Republican Leader Sen. Rodric Bray (R-Martinsville) noted Baldwin said he wasn't affiliated with the group. "In his time in the Indiana Senate, Sen. Baldwin has been a very thoughtful and capable leader for us on a number of subjects," Bray said.

### HD71: Hawkins to seek GOP nomination

Jeffersonville Councilman Scott Hawkins announced he will seek HD71 held by Democrat State Rep. Rita Fleming. "I am running for state representative because the people of Southern Indiana need someone that will fight for them in Indianapolis. We deserve a representative that understands struggle, hard work, and has a track record of getting things done while standing strong on their core values. I look forward to being that representative," Hawkins said. He is serving his second term as a Jeffersonville City Councilman and has been teaching U.S. government and history at Jeffersonville High School for 26+ years. Hawkins said, "This is still a 50-50 district after the 2021 redistricting. I believe the dissatisfaction with what is going on in Washington and my unique perspective of a regular guy who grew up in a Clarksville trailer park with a single mom and then became a teacher, business owner and councilman in Jeffersonville will help us make an argument for change in District 71." ❖

# How do you defend the 'Big Lie' without lying?

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – How do you defend the Big Lie without lying? That's a problem for many Republicans in Washington.

They know, after all the failed court challenges, recounts, audits and lack of any suspicious traces of bamboozle on Arizona ballots, that Donald Trump lost the presidential election. They also know that Trump continues to promote the Big Lie that he actually won. And he demands obedience in furtherance of that delusion from Republicans in the House and Senate and other elected offices around the nation.



Trump stresses that his base won't support Republicans who reject harping about a stolen election. Woe to any admitting that

fraud allegations have been thoroughly and conclusively disproven. Trump warned bluntly in a recent statement: "If we don't solve the presidential election fraud of 2020 – which we have thoroughly and conclusively documented – Republicans will not be voting in '22 or '24. It is the single most important thing for Republicans to do."

House Republican Whip Steve Scalise of Louisiana confronted the problem in a Fox News interview. When asked repeatedly if he believed the 2020 election was stolen from Trump, Scalise won a dance contest, avoiding a direct answer and contending only that some states didn't follow their standard election laws – true because of the pandemic but not changing vote results.

**Why did Scalise dance?** Why not flat-out lie? Why not claim, as Trump does in his obsession with blotting out an ego-shattering defeat, that Joe Biden isn't a legitimate president? Well, Scalise knows the election was long ago decided and he doesn't want to go down in history as a liar.

Why then didn't Scalise respond with the whole

truth, Biden won, no fraud? Well, he knows that such a truthful response would bring the wrath of Trump. Trump would denounce "Stupid Steve" and demand that House Republicans remove Scalise as whip, just as they removed Liz Cheney from a leadership post when she rejected the Big Lie.

Another Louisiana Republican, Sen. Bill Cassidy, did speak out against Trump's demand for Republicans to be obedient. "If we relitigate 2020 over and over again, it won't change the result in 2020, but we are sure to lose in 2024," he said. "If we choose to look forward, bringing positive solutions to the American people who have needs, we win. If we choose to be bullied, we lose."

Trump response? Typical. He gave the senator a new title, "Wacky," and said he isn't really a Republican. Fear of such treatment keeps more Washington Republicans from telling the truth about the Big Lie. Better to dance, they calculate politically, and call for more investigations of 2020 "fraud."

**If a Republican member** of Congress crosses Trump, that member is likely to be opposed by a Trump-backed opponent in the next GOP primary. Trump warns about that. And polling shows his base remains strong, strong enough to be decisive in a many Republican primaries. A recent Quinnipiac University poll found that 78% of Republicans want Trump to run for president in 2024. He gained GOP support since May, when the poll found 66% wanting him to run again.

Now, that doesn't mean that all those Republicans believe the Big Lie, although a lot probably have

been convinced by the repetition of the claim. Some just want Trump back, no matter the 2020 results. The way Democrats bumbled for the entire summer without passage of a popular infrastructure bill no doubt adds to that opinion.

The resulting drop in Biden's approval ratings and enhanced chances of Republicans gaining control of the House in 2022 also provide incentive for congressional Republicans. Defend the Big Lie without lying. Just

dance around it and hope it turns into a victory dance for a Republican congressional majority. ❖

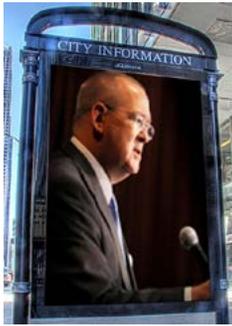


**Colwell is a columnist for the South Bend Tribune.**

# Deep worries about education, employment

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Today’s tight labor markets, which seem especially pronounced among low-wage jobs, have led to considerable speculation about the future of work. Of course, the labor market shocks of the pandemic set new records of unemployment, and the disease likely caused a million Americans to die early. It is natural that we should anticipate many long-term economic changes. However, the likelihood that the pandemic has radically altered the prospects for low-wage workers seems pretty modest.



It is true that pay and benefits for traditionally low-skilled jobs are rising, and likely to continue to increase over the coming months. This will be welcomed by many, but there’s a catch. The new higher wages must be accompanied by higher productivity from these workers. These are markets; employers can only sustain higher labor costs if the workers are actually producing more value in the workplace. As this occurs, there’ll be fewer jobs available in these occupations.

That dynamic is normal in a market economy. History is full of occupations that disappeared due to rising wages that were not matched by productivity growth. That’s really the story of economic growth, captured well by Agatha Christie’s quip, “I couldn’t imagine being too poor to afford servants, or so rich as to be able to afford a car.”

It seems crazy today, but we should be at least considering what those extra workers might do to sustain themselves and their families. Recent evidence gives us a hint about a return to existing trends.

**Over the past 12 months**, 44% of new jobs went to those with a college degree. This is remarkable because the bulk of pandemic job losses occurred in occupations with few college graduates. The big job losses were among front-line workers in retail, accommodations, and restaurants. Notably, the only category of workers to enjoy employment that is higher now than before the pandemic are those with a four-year degree or higher. This post-pandemic recession trend simply continues a decades-long shift in the demand for workers. Over the past 30 years, more than eight out of every 10 jobs created in the United States went to college graduates. The remaining two out of every 10 jobs went to adults who’d been to college, but didn’t have a four-year degree. For the remaining workers – everyone with a high school diploma or less – there are actually fewer jobs today than 30 years ago.

That trend is too strong and based in far more fundamental economic conditions to be derailed by a pandemic. History offers some insight into this. From the dawn of time until the industrial revolution, the prime source of wealth was arable or mineable land. From the early 19th Century until the late 20th Century, wealth flowed to those who owned productive capital, such as factories. Today, wealth comes from knowledge, or what economists call human capital.

Human capital is a slippery thing to measure. Much of it comes from home, taught to us by parents. Some of it is intrinsic; it comes in our genes, reflected in our intellect and mental health. This is why it is critical to choose your parents wisely – and, whether or not you chose the right mom and dad, the easiest way to improve your stock of human capital is through formal schooling.

**That is why increased** access to higher education is so important to individuals and to the nation as a whole. It is worth pausing here to note that Indiana is struggling with this. Relative to the nation, our educational attainment numbers fell during the long recovery from the Great Recession and worsened during COVID. We will start 2022 with three consecutive years of declining educational attainment of adults. It will be the worst stretch in the state’s history.

I share these data this often, repeating as frequently as I can that a college degree is among the few gateways to an economically successful adulthood. But, I am often confronted with the question about skilled trades and the ready employment options they possess. This is a good question. Skilled trades can be a great option for many young men and women. They pay well and offer job security, satisfaction, good benefits and a pathway to business ownership.

I can hardly write enough good words about the future of many of these crafts. If I could invest money in a high school student pursuing a career as a plumber, electrician, masonry or carpentry, I’d do so. I also respect the grit and work ethic of those who do that work. I am hardly alone in expressing these sentiments, but there is an intractable problem in viewing trades as a remedy for our low rates of college attendance.

Indiana has 38,020 masons, electricians, plumbers and carpenters, but in a typical year 39,000 Hoosier kids turn 19 with no plans to attend college. The trades are a good option for motivated, smart, hardworking kids, but these jobs will absorb only a tiny fraction of those Hoosier kids who don’t go to college. This is precisely the same story nationwide; in fact this sort of belief is a formal logical fallacy taught in introductory economics course.

**The fallacy of composition** tells us that it is an error to think that because one young person can make a career in the trades, all can. This fallacy motivates far too much of our discussion about college and careers. We’d be far better off leaning heavily on the actual data about job creation and educational attainment, and give up the anecdotes about the trades.

Today, as employers struggle to fill vacant positions and face paying higher wages, we see the very conditions that prompt the dislocation of workers.

**We shouldn't fear it;** indeed, we should call it by its proper name, economic growth. While we see some formerly low-wage workers benefitting from higher pay, we also must be ready to consider the many men and women affected by this recession.

I realize that today's tight labor markets make the concern about longer-term unemployment a distant worry.

## Birth rates have been falling for some time

By **LARRY DeBOER**

WEST LAFAYETTE – Americans are having fewer children. Reports this past summer showed that the fertility rate dropped in 2020, to 56 births per 1,000 women age 15 to 44. Only 5.6% of women in their child-bearing years had babies. Early indications for 2021 showed a further decline.



Fertility has been dropping for more than a decade. Fertility rates peaked in 2007 at 69 per 1,000 women age 15 to 44. The rate had been rising in the decade before that.

Let's take a longer view. Much longer. The fertility rate has been falling most decades for at least 220 years. We have more than two centuries of data, thanks to the U.S. Constitution, which requires a census every 10 years. So we know that in 1800 the fertility rate was 278 per 1,000 women age 15 to 44. More than one in four women of child-bearing age had babies. The average woman had seven children.

The fertility rate began to fall right away. In 1810 it was 274. By 1900 it was 130. National reporting of birth certificates made annual data available by 1909, so we know the birth rate hit a low point of 76 during the Depression in 1936.

**The baby boom** interrupted the downward trend, for a while. Fertility peaked in 1957 at 123 births per 1,000 women age 15 to 44. It hadn't been that high since 1916. But the rise was temporary. Fertility dropped again in the 1960s, and in 1972 it set a record low at 73. It bounced around in the high 60s for 30 years before beginning its most recent drop.

One explanation for this long fall in fertility is economic. The industrial revolution and technological advances increased productivity. People became more skilled and machines became more efficient. The amount of goods and services produced by each worker, each machine, and

It should not be. We have yet to suffer through a recession that didn't deeply affect millions of workers. This one, the worst since the Great Depression, will ultimately prove no different. ❖

**Michael J. Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics at Ball State University.**

each acre of land increased. Profits and wages rose.

Why did this affect the number of children that families had? Agriculture became more productive, so fewer people were needed on the farm to grow the nation's food. Families moved to cities to work in factories and offices. Fewer children worked on farms, and child labor in factories eventually became illegal. Children no longer earned income for the family. They became less productive and more expensive.

Wages increased for both men and women, so staying home with children cost more in lost pay. The "opportunity cost" of having children increased, even though rising productivity cut the costs of food and clothing. When something is more expensive, people do less of it.

**Industrial revolution**, technological advances and rising incomes are powerful long-run reasons why birth rates declined. So, why did this trend reverse in the years after World War II? What caused the baby boom? Yes, soldiers came home and nature took its course. But the baby boom lasted for 20 years. Something else was going on.

My favorite explanation of the baby boom recognizes that the parents of the boomers were the children of the Great Depression. Growing up in those dismal times taught them that having children was a big risk. When the economy of the 1950s and 1960s was much better, they took advantage and had more kids.

The baby boom was a two-decade exception to a two-century trend. By the mid-'60s the children of the Depression were near the end of their child-bearing years. The long-run trend toward fewer births returned and has continued to today.

Whether this is a problem or not depends on your point of view. Fewer births mean an older population, which makes Social Security and Medicare more costly. Slower population growth may restrict economic growth. Slower growth in the number of employees makes business expansion harder, and there are fewer incentives to increase production when the number of customers is growing slowly. Slower population growth may also mean less pressure on the world's resources. This could help head off the worst consequences of climate change.

Lower fertility may cause problems. Lower fertility may have benefits. The rates and their impact definitely merit our continued attention and analysis. ❖

# Time to consider term limits for Indiana

By **DAVE KITCHELL**

LOGANSPOURT – One of the best phrases to come out of this crazy year is that “voters ought to be able to choose the people who represent them, not the other way around.”

We’ve heard similar things in Indiana with the traditional claims of gerrymandering every decade when legislative and congressional maps are redrawn. Let’s face it, it’s a no-win situation for both parties – one figuratively, and one literally.



Absent a nonpartisan commission that would redraw maps, the best solution is one that hasn’t been talked about for some time. And with the failure of voting reform proposals in Congress, it’s

time to look at a concept that is the one antidote left.

Term limits.

Indiana term-limits its governors and statewide officeholders, along with some county officeholders. If we agreed to impose say a 12-year term limit on all members of the Congress, we could stop talking about “preserving” a member’s district and start talking about creating districts that make sense. We’d see fewer career politicians in either party, and for those who constantly harp about Nancy Pelosi and Mitch McConnell, both sides would be happy.

But the freshness of this requirement is that it would bring more people into the process and encourage the people who are elected to get something done in the short time they’re there.

We don’t hear much about passing term limits because getting members of Congress to do it would be asking them to limit their own income potential. The Indiana General Assembly could impose them, but don’t look for that to happen unless there is a public outcry.

**Sure, it would cut** short the careers of people like the late Charlie Halleck and the former 1st District Rep. Pete Visclosky. But it would encourage a natural progression of people – younger people – to get involved in politics. It would likely prevent someone like Charles Grassley running for another term at age 88.

How far-fetched is this? Not very. Consider that 23 states already have term limits and 15 legislatures have them. It can be done and has, but it takes some shared sacrifice. In 21 of those states, the popularity of the measure was 64%. It’s an answer to the fatigue voters have with incumbents who do more running for election than serving the public.

It will shut off the public trough of salary and

benefits for those that spend most of their years fattening up on taxpayer dollars.

**It also would curtail** the seniority perks that last for decades. But most importantly, it would end this discussion of gerrymandering once and for all and create a more nimble model. It takes some courage to sign onto it, but it hasn’t taken much courage to perpetuate a system both sides only complain about. For that matter, a 12-year limit for the Supreme Court justices wouldn’t be a bad thing either. ❖

**Kitchell is the former Democratic mayor of Logansport.**



# Snail’s pace of income

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Somehow we learned that Caesar wrote “Gaul is divided into three parts.” So too the United States is divided by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) into three classes of counties.

Those counties with a city of 50,000 or more persons, or a strong commuting relationship to such a county, are in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (Metros).



Secondarily, OMB created Micropolitan Statistical Areas (Micros), counties with cities of 10,000 or more inhabitants.

Third, if with a population smaller than a Micro, and without a significant commuting relationship with a Micro or Metro, then you don’t get a special name. However, I’ll label you as a Rural county.

Metro areas dominate the nation with 86% of the population. They are the focus of employment, entertainment, and environmental damage. In addition, the federal government puts aside beaucoup bucks for their projects, which are often more expensive than they would be in less densely populated areas.

Between Metro and Rural counties, stand 543 struggling Micro areas, which receive less funding and very little attention. U.S. Metro areas’ populations grew by 8.3% between 2009 and 2019, just ahead of the nation’s 7.0% increase. Micro areas, however, advanced a mere 0.7%.

**Indiana, as expected,** was somewhat different. In the Hoosier Holyland, 45 metro counties contained only 78%, not 86% of our population. Metro counties grew by 5.4% or 291,000 persons, but the state showed growth of 273,000. The difference: a 9,200 decline in 27 Micro counties and an 8,800-person loss in 20 Rural counties. Because of tradition and powerful lobbying, Rural America is gifted with funds and grief for its decline.

In Hoosier Micros, with city populations of 10,000

to 50,000 residents, the population declined in 15 areas. The biggest decline was a loss of 4,400 in Marion (Grant County). In 11 gaining Micros, the biggest advance, 2,400, was in Seymour (Jackson County). In percentage terms the highest rate of growth (6.3%) was realized in the Washington Micro (Daviness County), while the sharpest decline (-6.3%) was in Marion once again.

**Some folks will tell** you, "It isn't the number of persons gained or lost that matters as much as the change in relative Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI)." That's relative to the state's PCPI. In Indiana, Metro areas' PCPI shrank slightly from 3.6% ahead of the state's \$34,102 in

2009 to 3.3% above the statewide \$48,678 in 2019.

In Micro and Rural areas there were slight improvements as Rural areas' PCPI deficit was reduced from -14.3% to -14.0%. Likewise, the difference between the statewide PCPI and the Micro PCPI declined from -11.4% to -11.1%. This small convergence toward the state average PCPI might be seen in a positive light by some. Others would find moving up toward a state average that is itself 13% below the national PCPI, is not cause for rejoicing. ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an economist.**

## Voting rights act once drew bipartisan support

By **KELLY HAWES**  
**CNHI State Bureau**

ANDERSON – A recent Facebook post from an affiliate of the conservative Heritage Foundation accuses Senate Democrats of mounting a crusade against election integrity.



It calls the Freedom to Vote Act the "Freedom to Cheat Act," and it nicknames an earlier bill, the For the People Act, "The Corrupt Politicians Act." Both bills, it says, would "automatically register ineligible voters."

That's not exactly true. "While there is a provision in the Freedom to Vote Act that requires states to offer automatic voter registration," the fact-checking

website PolitiFact states, "the goal is to make it easier for eligible citizens to register at their state motor-vehicle offices, and the wording in the bill repeatedly clarifies that only eligible citizens can vote in federal elections."

Scary stories are nothing new in this fight. Speaking at a hearing before the Senate Rules Committee last spring, Republican U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas labeled the For the People Act "Jim Crow 2.0." "This legislation would register millions of illegal aliens to vote," he said. "It is intended to do that."

**Cruz claimed the measure** would "dilute the legal votes of American citizens."

"This bill doesn't protect voting rights," he said. "It steals voting rights from the American people."

PolitiFact says none of that is true. "Although glitches and malfunctions of automatic registration systems have been recorded, they are rare and easily corrected," the website states. "We rate this claim Pants on Fire."

What the legislation really does is make permanent many of the temporary measures that led to record turnout

in the 2020 presidential election, the one Donald Trump falsely claims was rife with cheating. The bill expands early voting and makes voting by mail easier. It restores voting rights to people with felony convictions as long as they have completed their sentences.

Above all, it restores protections of the 56-year-old Voting Rights Act, a law that has seen its provisions gutted in recent years by the U.S. Supreme Court.

**Senate Majority Leader** Chuck Schumer called for bipartisanship as he sought just to begin talking about the legislation. "I hope that our Republican colleagues will join us in good faith, and as I have said before, if they have ideas on how to improve the legislation, we are prepared to hear them, debate them, and if they are in line with the goals of the legislation, include them in the bill," Schumer wrote. "But Republicans must come to the table to have that conversation and at the very least vote to open debate."

Schumer needed 10 Republican votes to end the filibuster. He got not a single one. Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and his caucus held firm. The protection of voting rights was once a bipartisan issue. Fifteen years ago, a Republican-controlled Senate renewed the measure by a vote of 96-0. The bill had passed a Republican-controlled House of Representatives by a vote of 390-33.

At a ceremony where he signed the legislation into law, Republican President George W. Bush recalled that in some states passage of the Voting Rights Act had marked the first appearance of African Americans on the voter rolls since Reconstruction. Among those first-time voters was 81-year-old Willie Bolden, the grandson of slaves. Bolden told a reporter that casting his ballot made him feel like he was somebody.

"In the America promised by our founders, every citizen is a somebody," the president said, "and every generation has a responsibility to add its own chapter to the unfolding story of freedom."

**The work toward a** more perfect union, he said, is never ending. "We'll continue to build on the legal equality won by the civil rights movement to help ensure that every person enjoys the opportunity that this great land of liberty offers," he said.

Someone ought to tell Mitch McConnell. ❖

# The Long Thread: How the GOP became House dominant

By KYLE KONDIK

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Four days before the 1994 election, President Bill Clinton heard a prediction from a top advisor that he didn't believe. Dick Morris, a Republican operative whom Clinton's staff found so distasteful that the president hid his relationship with him, told Clinton that Democrats were going to lose their majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. "No way, no way," Clinton responded, according to John Harris's biography of Clinton, *The Survivor*.

Few could blame Clinton for being incredulous about Morris's prediction. Democratic control of the House had been a given for decades. Save for brief two-year majorities the Republicans won in 1946 and 1952, the Democrats had held the House uninterrupted since they took a majority in a series of special elections in 1931, allowing them to capture the gavel when the House opened that year in December.

And yet Morris, of course, was right.

The Republican Revolution of 1994 represents a transitional point between more than a half century of Democratic dominance in the House and a more recent period that does not qualify as Republican "dominance" but is certainly more than just a slight political imbalance. In the years since 1994, Republicans will have held the House majority for 20 of the 28 years between 1995 and 2023, and they appear to hold more advantages in the race for majority control of the U.S. House of Representatives than the Democrats. But these advantages are not unassailable. Already, the Democrats have won House majorities in 4 of the 13 elections since 1994, whereas the Republicans only won majorities in 2 elections between the New Deal and their 1994 breakthrough.

**It may seem off base** to argue that the nation is in the midst of a period of Republican advantage in the House while the Democrats currently hold a majority (albeit a reduced one following Democratic setbacks in the 2020 election). Yet there are a number of factors that argue in favor of looking at the House as an institution in which Republicans are generally better positioned to capture majorities than Democrats are.

Overall, there are 3 major trends over the course of the 6 decades of House elections covered in *The Long*

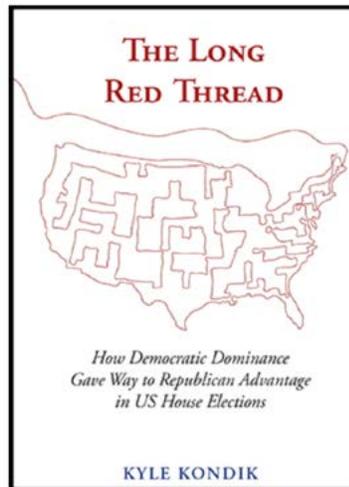
*Red Thread* that transformed the House from a body dominated by Democrats to one in which Republicans enjoy an ongoing electoral advantage. Those trends are nationalization, realignment, and reapportionment, all of which are inextricably linked.

**1. Nationalization:** Over the course of the period studied here, House results became increasingly correlated with presidential results. In the 1960s and 1970s, which serve as the beginning point of this study, it was common for presidential elections to feature a tremendous amount of down-ballot ticket splitting. For instance, during this period more than a quarter of House districts, even in closely contested presidential elections, could for instance vote for a Democrat for president and a Republican for the House, or vice versa. More recently,

there has been far less ticket splitting and more nationalization of results, which helps Republicans and hurts Democrats because of the Republicans' stronger influence over the redistricting process in the past couple of decades paired with, arguably, disparities in national population distribution that disadvantage Democrats. Additionally, some of the factors that helped sustain Democratic majorities -- such as the ideological diversity of members and the advantage of incumbency -- have eroded in recent years as elections have become more nationalized rather than localized.

**2. Realignment:** Over the last 6 decades, the American electorate has realigned its preferences. The South, historically the nation's most ideologically conservative region, nonetheless helped sustain Democratic control of the House even as the national Democratic Party was moving left. Over time, conservatives in the South started voting up and down the ballot for members of the more conservative national party: the Republicans. Meanwhile, ideologically less conservative regions, like the West Coast and Northeast, have moved toward the Democrats, with the more moderate Midwest oscillating between the two parties. These overall realigning trends have generally benefited the Republicans in aggregate.

**3. Reapportionment:** As noted above, Republicans over the past few decades have had more success dealing with reapportionment -- a term that covers not just the reallocation of House seats after each census based on population but also the process of drawing up new districts. The shifting of seats based on population changes from the slower-growing Northeast and Midwest to the faster-growing South and West helped Republicans at a crucial time, specifically in advance of the 2002 midterm, to maintain their House majority. Reapportionment may end up benefiting Republicans in advance of the 2022 midterm as well.



The emergence of a persistent Republican edge in the House has come at a time when the differences between the two parties have become increasingly stark. As political scientist Sam Rosenfeld argued in his recent history of the origins of polarization, *The Polarizers*: “The two major American political parties are now sorted quite clearly along ideological lines. The most liberal Republican member of Congress has amassed a voting record that is consistently to the right of the most conservative Democrat.”

With more ideologically consistent parties – almost all the liberals in the Democratic Party, and almost all of the conservatives in the Republican Party – there are fewer opportunities for legislative compromises. This was obvious from two of the biggest legislative fights in Congress over the past dozen years: the struggle to pass the Affordable Care Act in 2009-10, led by Democrats, and the struggle to do away with that same legislation, led by Republicans, in 2017.

**Republicans decided** to play no role in the passage of the Affordable Care Act (also known as “Obamacare”). Not only was it legislation that Republicans generally did not support on its merits, but they also decided they did not want to provide bipartisan cover for majority Democrats. They arguably were rewarded, electorally, for their efforts: Obamacare became law, but the backlash from it helped Republicans win back control of the House in 2010.

When Republicans tried to unwind Obamacare in 2017, Democrats – then in the minority themselves – not only disagreed with the Republicans’ health-care plans, but they were also disincentivized to provide bipartisan cover to the majority Republicans. The Republicans pushed an Obamacare repeal through the House with great effort, but those efforts died in the Senate. Democrats ran heavily on health care in 2018 and retook the majority. Political scientist Frances Lee, in her history of competition for majorities in the House and Senate, *Insecure Majorities*, described how both parties have come to believe, with great justification, that they can win majorities not by working with the majority party but by fighting it tooth and nail.

**That sort of behavior** also makes more sense when there’s not much ideological overlap between the two parties, which is true now but wasn’t necessarily true a few decades ago. “These developments,” Rosenfeld wrote, “have helped to give contemporary politics the distinctive character of high-stakes warfare.” This is all an elaborate way of saying that perhaps the only way either party can truly govern is when they have unified control of Washington – that is, if the parties can govern at all. It is important to note that the ideological cohesion of the parties has not necessarily made congressional majorities more effective at passing legislation, according to research by Lee along with political scientist James M. Curry in their book *The Limits of Party*.

Still, the majority party in the House has always

been important, and it may be more important in a time of hard partisanship, ideological cohesion, and little bipartisan cooperation. So if in fact the Republicans have an advantage in the race for the House – an advantage that doesn’t guarantee them perpetual control of the House but gives them a better chance at control than the Democrats – that has important consequences for governing.

**“The Long Red Thread”** is an exploration of how the House transitioned from a period of Democratic dominance to one of Republican advantage. The book is divided into 3 chapters, which together explore all 29 biennial national House elections held from 1964 through 2020: more than half a century of US electoral history. Clearly, this history cannot cover every single election: with 435 seats at stake every 2 years, this period features 12,615 individual elections, which would be impossible (and tedious) to cover in a single work. Instead, this book looks for larger trends and uses compelling individual results from each election to highlight them.

The starting point for this history, 1964, is not selected randomly. It was the first election after a series of monumental Supreme Court decisions that injected the principle of “one person, one vote” into the drawing of congressional and state legislative districts. Prior to these decisions, U.S. House districts were not required to have equal populations within states. But over the course of the mid to late 1960s, states changed their district maps to comply with these rulings. So 1964, the start of the Reapportionment Revolution, seemed like a logical place to begin a study on modern US House elections.

The first chapter covers the elections held from 1964 to 1974 and traces the changing district lines forced by the Supreme Court’s reapportionment decisions. This was a period of huge Democratic majorities, and the changing lines did not seem to significantly affect that dominance.

**The second chapter** brings the narrative up to 1994, when the Republicans finally won the House majority. Going election by election, this chapter traces how Republicans, despite remaining in the minority throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, did make subtle gains and, perhaps more importantly, avoided major losses while holding the White House for the entire 1980s.

Chapter 3 brings the story up to the present and describes the elections from 1996 to 2020. This was a period of consistent but not absolute Republican control, which was bolstered by stronger Republican control of the levers of redistricting power in many states, particularly during the post-2010 census round of redistricting.

“The Long Red Thread” takes something of a middle view on the redistricting question: On the one hand, there is voluminous evidence cited throughout that partisan redistricting affects outcomes and is important; on the other, this book does not go so far as to say that partisan redistricting can always guarantee outcomes or that redistricting can necessarily lock one party into majority control of the House. ❖

**John Krull, Statehouse File:** Some readers have taken me to task. They say I am too hard on former President Donald Trump. They argue that I should criticize President Joe Biden more. Furthermore, they contend that the Jan. 6 assault on the Capitol was no big deal. They say I should give Democrats who have done similar things a hard time. They may have a point. Maybe I should have upbraided former Vice President Al Gore when he encouraged his disappointed supporters to attack the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives after he lost the electoral vote count in 2000, even though he won the popular vote. Similarly, I probably should have eviscerated John Kerry when he refused to concede the 2004 election to George W. Bush and did everything he could to obstruct the transfer of power. And I should have laid waste to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton when she urged her disappointed supporters to invade and ransack the Capitol to prevent Trump's election from being certified in 2016. I also should have pounded on her hard for ordering allies and underlings to ignore or even defy subpoenas and thus obstruct justice when Congress tried to investigate the insurrection. But there's no need to be partisan about this. I also should have given Republican presidential nominees John McCain and Mitt Romney grief for attempting to overturn the election results in 2008 and 2012, respectively, when they each lost to President Barack Obama. I wonder why I didn't. Hmm. Maybe — and this is just a guess — I didn't do so because none of those things ever happened. ❖



**Jim Merritt, IBJ:** Whether it is medicinal or for legal adult use, it is time to legalize cannabis in Indiana. Given the state's proven track record of being incredibly accommodating to businesses and our strong agricultural roots, we are missing opportunities to attract new companies, create jobs and boost our economy overall. The tax revenue on the products would generate a considerable amount of money. Money that would supplement or replace taxes Hoosiers are currently paying. Money that could go toward funding public-health initiatives in areas that Indiana is falling behind in, such as treating health problems like diabetes, addiction and mental illness. We have lowered our infant mortality rate here and yet more needs to be done. The medicinal use of cannabis in various states has improved the lives of cancer patients and those attempting to manage pain. Interestingly, Amanda Chicago Lewis writes in a Wall Street Journal article, "The Healing Potential of Pot Without Plants," that "early studies show cannabigerol, or CBG, for example, holds promise as a treatment for neurological disorders." Legalizing cannabis will help our society. This change would also help our local courts and jails by no longer forcing nonviolent offenders to go through drawn-out legal proceedings and sentencing individuals to jail time for simply owning or consuming marijuana. This would allow our law en-

forcement and correctional officers, as well as our judges, to focus on the violence that has been increasing in our state and, more specifically, our capital city. While I do believe this would be a beneficial policy shift for a number of reasons, it is important to take our time to study the best way to adapt to such a major change. It would most likely require years of preparation. A framework would need to be set in place to properly regulate the manufacturing and distribution of cannabis products, as well as an overhaul of our current drug laws. And given the strong possibility of federal legalization, I think it is best that Indiana put some forethought into that possibility. Luckily, we would not be entering this new territory blind. Given how many states have legalized marijuana, we can reap the benefits of seeing where others were able to succeed, and the pitfalls they may have experienced along the way. How did they do it? What are best practices? We have been open-minded to the economic benefits of cannabis products on a smaller scale and have already altered our laws in recent years to allow the production of hemp. Why not go further? Are there any specific benefits to continuing to prohibit cannabis production and regulation other than we are afraid to take such a large step forward? We can learn from other states' experiences. ❖

**Stephanie Salter, Terre Haute Tribune-Star:** The last thing I expected after receiving my Covid-19 booster was to find myself fighting back tears. No, it was not because the shot hurt; it didn't. And no, it was not because I had some scary physical reaction like arrhythmia or trouble breathing. My verklempt moment occurred as I chatted with a young Indiana National Guardsman while waiting the required 15 minutes after the shot. My first two jabs this winter had been at Indiana University Health's Neuroscience Center in downtown Indianapolis. Both appointments were easy peasy. But for reasons I can't explain, I decided to get my third dose at a site that rarely is associated with viruses or vaccines: the Indianapolis 500 Motor Speedway. Ladies and gentlemen, start your boosters. The last of my Guardsmen guides asked how I was doing. Fine, I said, and began to ask him questions. How did this kind of duty compare to others he'd seen? "Compared to the Capitol riots and guarding prisoners in Pendleton, this is easy money," he said. Wow, I said. You were in D.C. after January 6? Did you have to sleep in a parking garage? The Guardsman laughed and said, "Those guys were just taking a nap. Really, when you look at most of the other deployment sites we get, an air conditioned garage is luxury." I said I figured hanging around a parking lot all day wasn't exactly the kind of operation he had signed up for when he joined the Guard. The young man paused. "I guess not," he said, "but you know, I signed up to help make my community safe. That sure seems like what I'm doing here with this, don't you think?" ❖

## Challenged abortion law takes effect

INDIANAPOLIS — An Indiana anti-abortion law that requires doctors to report a long list of supposed complications from abortion is taking effect ([Indiana Public Media](#)). That's after a federal appeals court decision that overturned earlier rulings that had struck down the law. A 2018 law, SEA 340, requires doctors to report a list of 25 "complications ... arising from" abortions, including "psychological complications" like anxiety. And they face criminal penalties if they fail to do so. Multiple courts halted that law, ruling it was too broad and vague to enforce. Lawmakers narrowed the law in 2019, limiting some of the broad language. But the list of complications remained.



## Biden bill fizzles as tempers flare

WASHINGTON ([AP](#)) — Top Democrats signaled a deal is within reach on President Joe Biden's big domestic bill, but momentum fizzled and tempers flared as a paid family leave proposal fell out and a billionaires' tax appeared scrapped, mostly to satisfy a pivotal member of the 50-50 Senate. With his signature domestic initiative at stake, Biden will head to Capitol Hill on Thursday morning to urge Democratic lawmakers to bring talks on the social services and climate change bill "over the finish line" before he departs for global summits overseas. Still in the mix: expanded health care programs, free pre-kindergarten and some \$500 billion to tackle climate change remain in what's now at least a \$1.75 trillion package. And Democrats are eyeing a new surcharge on the wealthy — 5% on incomes above \$10 million and an additional 3% on those beyond \$25 million — to help pay for it, according to a person who

insisted on anonymity to discuss the private talks.

## Child vaccine coming next week

INDIANAPOLIS ([AP](#)) — Indiana officials said Wednesday that the state should be able to immediately inoculate a third of children ages 5 to 11 as preparations are made to expand Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for the age group if the federal government gives it approval. The Indiana Department of Health's chief medical officer Dr. Lindsay Weaver said the state expects to receive 200,000 additional COVID vaccines intended for the state's roughly 600,000 5- to 11-year-olds on Monday and Tuesday. Smaller shipments of the vaccine are expected in the following weeks, a process similar to earlier COVID vaccine rollouts, Weaver said.

## Qatar delegation meets officials

INDIANAPOLIS — Representatives from a Qatar economic delegation in Indianapolis on Tuesday expressed optimism that the country's up-and-coming business relationship with Indiana will continue to strengthen ([IBJ](#)). Members from the Qatari commercial attache's office met with Gov. Eric Holcomb, Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers and more than 30 Indiana-based companies. The visit followed Holcomb and Chambers' business development trip to Qatar in July, which was designed to foster economic ties between the state and Qatar.

## Indy has \$91M in rental assistance

INDIANAPOLIS — Mayor Joe Hogsett announced on Wednesday that the IndyRent program is accepting applications for up to a year for providing rent relief ([CBS4](#)). This expansion was approved unanimously by the City-County Council in Sep-

tember and was funded through a \$91 million rental assistance allocation from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. "We're proud to continue to extend a lifeline to residents still feeling the economic impact of the pandemic," Hogsett said in a press release. "This extension provides an opportunity to families across Indianapolis to regain economic stability and more equitably experience prosperity."

## Solar farm OK'd for Posey County

POSEY COUNTY ([WFIE](#)) - CenterPoint Energy says its electric and natural gas business, CenterPoint Energy Indiana South, received approval from the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission to acquire a 300-megawatt (MW) solar array, as well as enter into a power purchase agreement (PPA) for an additional 100 MWs of solar energy. CenterPoint Energy officials say they entered into an agreement with Arevon Energy Management, the company that will build the utility-owned project in Posey County. Arevon Energy Management and energy company Tenaska are co-developing the project.

## Trump eyes Va. campaign stop

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump's proclamation that he'd "soon" visit Virginia as the state's gubernatorial race comes to a close was so unexpected that few outside his inner orbit knew it was coming and the Republican candidate's own campaign was left searching for details ([Politico](#)). Aides to Glenn Youngkin said they were caught off guard by the former president's Wednesday afternoon statement. Within a few hours, there was some clarity. Trump wasn't actually planning to stop in the commonwealth, at least not imminently, according to aides. Still, the scramble that the prospect of a Trump visit set off underscored just how much of a wild card he remains.